THE EXPRESSES OF MAINE – PRIVATE & POSTAL
1840 - 1865

The expressing of letters, parcels and valuables was "invented" by William F. Harnden in 1839. This new industry received enthusiastic public support and by 1840 had spread to Maine. Expressing there over the next quarter century was both turbulent and engaging.

- The industry evolved as it benefited from and contributed to the economic growth of the region as the affects of the Panic of 1837 and the subsequent depression subsided.
- Private expresses participated in the Independent Mails Period (1844-1845).
- Targeted by Post Office Department rate reductions, route restrictions and a mailable matter monopoly, private expresses adapted and survived.
- Transportation was modernizing as railroads supplemented and supplanted steamships and stages, growing sevenfold during this period.
- Post Office Department Express Mail was introduced in the region as a reaction to private expressing.
- Rates based on Spanish and Mexican reales were replaced, with the use of foreign currency eventually being banned.

Scope: Appropriate Postal History will demonstrate rates, routes, modes of transportation, markings and conjunctive arrangements to illuminate the expresses of Maine, 1840-1865.

Exhibit Plan: Expresses appear chronologically from the time at which they first offered service within the state of Maine. Relevant milestones are introduced in text box page headings.

- Significant pieces are matted blue.